

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

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DRAFTED BY NEA/P:EOJONES:DP
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S/PRS - MR. FUNSETH (INFO)
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SSM - MR. MC ANDREW
NEA - MS. GRIFFIN
NEA/ARN - MR. DRAPER
NEA/EGY - MR. NEWBERRY
NEA/IAI - MR. SMITH

----- 108415 /65

O 231627Z DEC 76
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY SANA
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
USMISSION SINAI
AMCONSUL DHAHRAN
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
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AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USMISSION NATO
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION USUN NY
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
USCINCEUR

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GENEVA FOR MEPC DEL, CINCEUR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING - DECEMBER 22

1. FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE, FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS FROM DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN'S PRESS BRIEFING FOR DECEMBER 22, 1976:

YOU SHOULD HAVE IN FRONT OF YOU A PRESS RELEASE ENTITLED "U.S. RECONSTRUCTION ASSISTANCE TO LEBANON."

THIS PRESS RELEASE SUMMARIZES THE RESULTS OF THE VISIT OF GHASSAN TUEINI, WHO IS, AS YOU KNOW, THE PERSONAL EMISSARY OF PRESIDENT SARKIS.

THE STATEMENT LISTS THOSE OFFICIALS WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE TALKS. IT REAFFIRMS U.S. GOVERNMENT SUPPORT OF THE TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY, SOVEREIGNTY, AND NATIONAL UNITY OF UNCLASSIFIED

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LEBANON.

IT MAKES THE POINT THAT THE U.S. GOVERNMENT IS PLANNING A PL-480, TITLE I, FOOD AID PROGRAM FOR LEBANON OF \$20 MILLION, SUBJECT TO APPROPRIATE CONSULTATIONS WITH THE CONGRESS.

THIS WILL BE IN ADDITION TO THE TOTAL OF \$19 MILLION IN HUMANITARIAN AID WHICH WE HAVE ALREADY PROVIDED INCLUDING FOOD AID UNDER PL-480, TO FEED 300,000 PEOPLE IN LEBANON, WHICH IS PRESENTLY UNDERWAY.

WE HAVE CONSIDERED, WITH THE LEBANESE DELEGATION, THE QUESTION OF THE LONGER TERM NEEDS OF LEBANON, AND WE HAVE AGREED TO EXAMINE WITH THEM POSSIBLE WAYS IN WHICH WE CAN BE HELPFUL, INCLUDING THE PROVISION OF TECHNICAL AND MANAGERIAL EXPERTISE IN RESTORING ON AN EMERGENCY BASIS THE REMAINING BEIRUT PORT FACILITIES TO SUPPORT RELIEF AND

REHABILITATION EFFORT.

WE WILL CONTINUE OUR CLOSE CONSULTATIONS WITH THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT AS IT LAYS THE FOUNDATION FOR THE COUNTRY'S LONG-TERM RECONSTRUCTION PROGRAM.

WHEN WE HAVE A CLEARER PICTURE OF THE CONTRIBUTION THE U.S. CAN MAKE TO LEBANON'S LONGER TERM NEEDS, WE WILL DISCUSS WITH THE CONGRESS POSSIBLE FUTURE PROGRAMS AND THEIR FUNDING.

I WOULD ALSO POINT OUT, AS THE RELEASE NOTES, THAT WE WILL BE SENDING A TEAM UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF BLAINE RICHARDSON OF AID CONSISTING OF FIVE OR SIX SPECIALISTS. IN ADDITION TO PORTS AND PORT EQUIPMENT, IT WILL INCLUDE ENGINEERING, HOUSING REPAIR, AND POSSIBLY A FOOD SPECIALIST

Q. BOB, THERE HAVE BEEN SOME SUGGESTIONS THAT WHAT WOULD UNCLASSIFIED

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BE BEST FOR LEBANON WOULD BE SOME KIND OF AN AID CONSORTIUM OF INTERNATIONAL EFFORT.

IS THE UNITED STATES COORDINATING THIS WITH ANYBODY ELSE?

A. WE WILL BE DISCUSSING IT WITH OTHER COUNTRIES, AS WELL, BUT PRIMARILY WHAT THIS REFLECTS IS THE TALKS THAT WE HAVE HAD WITH THE LEBANESE. I THINK THE PRESS RELEASE INDICATES THAT WE INTEND TO COORDINATE OUR AID PROGRAM WITH INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND OTHER DONORS.

OBTAINING, LEBANON IS ALSO ITSELF DISCUSSING ITS NEEDS WITH POTENTIAL DONORS, IN ADDITION TO THE UNITED STATES.

Q. DOES THAT MEAN THAT THE U.S. IS TAKING THE LEAD IN TRYING TO COORDINATE AN INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM?

A. I THINK LEBANON IS PROBABLY TAKING THE LEAD, BUT WE

CERTAINLY, AS A MAJOR DONOR, ARE INVOLVED IN CONSULTATIONS WITH OTHER DONORS.

Q. BOB, WHILE WE ARE ON THE SUBJECT OF ASSISTANCE, THE QUESTION REGARDING THE UNIFICATION, PROJECTED UNIFICATION OF EGYPT AND SYRIA --

Q. ARE YOU LEAVING THIS SUBJECT?

Q. NO. WELL, I WANT TO ASK WHETHER THE ASSISTANCE WE HAVE EARMARKED FOR EGYPT AND FOR SYRIA SEPARATELY WILL BE MADE

TO A COMBINED GOVERNMENT, OR HOW WILL YOU HANDLE THAT?

A. I DO NOT THINK THERE WAS AN INDICATION IN THEIR JOINT ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE IMMEDIACY OF THAT ACTION. OBVIOUSLY, IF YOU HAVE ONE GOVERNMENT -- IF YOU HAVE A CHANGE OF THE KIND YOU DESCRIBE IN THE POLITICAL ORGANIZATION --
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THEN THAT WOULD HAVE TO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN OUR INTER-GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS. BUT, FROM MY READING OF THAT PRESS ANNOUNCEMENT, I THINK THAT WOULD BE PREMATURE AT THIS POINT.

Q. ON THE REQUEST THAT YOU WILL BE MAKING TO CONGRESS, IS THERE ANY RANGE OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE THAT YOU ARE NOW CONSIDERING? ARE WE TALKING ABOUT ONE MILLION OR A HUNDRED MILLION OR WHAT?

A. AT THIS POINT, I AM CERTAINLY NOT IN A POSITION TO DISCUSS MONEY FIGURES. WE DO HAVE THE EXPERT TEAM GOING. AND THERE WILL ALSO BE FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS BY US AFTER THE LEBANESE DELEGATION LEAVES. THEN WE WILL CERTAINLY BE CONSULTING WITH THE CONGRESS. BUT I HAVE NOT BEEN INFORMED OF ANY RANGE AT THIS POINT.

Q. DO YOU HAVE ANY ASSESSMENT ON THE EGYPTIAN-LEBANESE -- SORRY, EGYPTIAN-SYRIAN POLITICAL COMMENT?

A. NO.

Q. NOTHING?

A. NO.

ROBINSON

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